

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9068

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 TAIPEI 2208

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SUBJECT: VISUAL SEARCH MICROFILM FILES

REF : STATE 058708, MAR 11, 1976

THE FOLLOWING IS AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF VISUAL SEARCH MICROFILM FILES (VSMF) AS A MEANS OF IDENTIFYING U.S. SUPPLIERS FOLLOWING THE OUTLINE PROVIDED IN REFTEL.

A) A TOTAL OF 131 VISITORS USED VSMF IN TAIPEI DURING THE 59-WORKDAY PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1, 1976 THROUGH MARCH 31, 1976. BREAKDOWN OF THE NUMBER OF USERS PER MONTH IS AS FOLLOWS: JANUARY - 56, FEBRUARY - 29, MARCH - 46. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT CHINESE NEW YEAR OCCURRED IN FEBRUARY, WHEN LOCAL FIRMS TRADITIONALLY CEASE OPERATION FOR ABOUT ONE WEEK. THE BREAKDOWN BY TYPE OF USER IS: LOCAL BUSINESSMEN - 65 PERCENT, FOREIGN SERVICE LOCAL PERSONNEL - 20 PERCENT, CHINESE MILITARY - 5 PERCENT, U.S. BUSINESSMEN - 10 PERCENT.

B) THE PERCENTAGE UTILIZATION OF ALL FOUR VSMF FILES WAS: (1) PLANT ENGINEERING SERVICE - 36 PERCENT, (2) DESIGN ENGINEERING SERVICE - 24 PERCENT, (3) BUILDING PRODUCTS FILE - 20 PERCENT AND (4) DOCUMENTATION SERVICE - 20 PERCENT.

C) THE PRODUCT CATEGORIES MOST FREQUENTLY SOUGHT WERE INDUSTRIAL PROCESS CONTROL INSTRUMENTS (SIC 3823), VALVES (3494), INSTRUMENTS TO MEASURE ELECTRICITY (3825), BUILDERS' HARDWARE (3429), AIR COMPRESSORS (3563), FLUID METERS (3824), PACKAGING MACHINERY FOR INDUSTRIAL FOOD PRODUCTS (3551), ASBESTOS BUILDING MATERIALS (3292),
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ETC.

D) THE VSMF IS LOCATED IN THE COMMERCIAL LIBRARY ON GROUND FLOOR OF U.S. TRADE CENTER. IT IS PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED AND IN FULL VIEW OF EVERYONE ENTERING THE LIBRARY. A FOREIGN SERVICE LOCAL IS ON HAND TO ASSIST ANYONE USING THE SYSTEM. SINCE MICROFILM SYSTEM IS A RELATIVELY NEW CONCEPT TO TAIWAN, PRACTICALLY ALL VISITORS REQUIRED ASSISTANCE OF LIBRARIAN TO EXPLAIN AND OPERATE THE SYSTEM.

E) THE VSMF HAS BEEN PUBLICIZED EXTENSIVELY THROUGH AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE NEWSLETTER, LOCAL ECONOMIC JOURNALS AND PERIODICALS, AND THE EMBASSY'S COMMERCIAL NEWSLETTER. IN JANUARY, 1975, THE SYSTEM WAS USED IN AN OFF-SITE TRADE CENTER EXHIBITION, PRINT '75. WE HAVE ALSO HELD SEMINARS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ON APPLICATION OF VSMF SYSTEM AND ARE CONTINUALLY PROMOTING USE OF IT WITH LOCAL BUSINESSMEN AND GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS. IN ADDITION, WE ARE PREPARING TO MOVE THE SYSTEM TO OUR UP-COMING OFF-SITE EXHIBITION, CONSTRUCTION '76.

F) IN PREPARING FOR EACH SHOW, THE TRADE CENTER STAFF USES VSMF TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON EXHIBITORS. ALSO, THROUGH VSMF, TRADE CENTER STAFF IS OFTEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY U.S. MANUFACTURERS WITH LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES WHO MIGHT BE RECRUITED LOCALLY TO PARTICIPATE IN TRADE CENTER EVENTS.

THE VSMF SYSTEM IS USEFUL TO POST PERSONNEL IN ANSWERING DAILY TRADE INQUIRIES. THE SYSTEM HAS ENHANCED THE POST'S TRADE OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM BY ENABLING US TO IDENTIFY U.S. MANUFACTURERS QUICKLY. UNDER TOP, IT USUALLY TOOK A MONTH TO RECEIVE THE DESIRED INFORMATION, AFTER WHICH THE LOCAL BUSINESSMEN STILL HAD TO WRITE THE U.S. FIRMS TO OBTAIN CATALOGS, ETC. BY USING VSMF, THEY CAN NOW MAKE A COPY OF COMPLETE CATALOGS WITH SPECIFICATIONS AND APPLICATION DATA IN ONE OR TWO DAYS.

G) ASIDE FROM DAY TO DAY USE OF THE SYSTEM, VSMF PLAYED
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AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE TRADE CENTER SHOWS. DURING EACH SHOW, MANY VISITORS WANTED TO LOCATE ADDITIONAL MANUFACTURERS OF PRODUCTS IN WHICH THEY WERE INTERESTED. THESE VISITORS WERE USUALLY EXPERTS IN THEIR FIELDS AND MOST WERE PROSPECTIVE BUYERS. AS THEY ALREADY KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT THE PRODUCTS THEY WERE SEEKING, THE TRADITIONAL PRINTED DIRECTORIES WITH A FEW SPECIFICATIONS DID NOT MEET THEIR NEEDS. THE VSMF SYSTEM PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN SUCH

CASES. THE POST HAD USED THE VSMF SYSTEM AT A TRADE CENTER OFF-SITE EXHIBITION, PRINT '75. DURING THIS SHOW, A LARGE NUMBER OF VISITORS USED THE SYSTEM TO LOCATE OTHER U.S. MANUFACTURERS WHO PRODUCED PRODUCTS SIMILAR TO THOSE EXHIBITED TO COMPARE SPECIFICATIONS WITH THOSE ON DISPLAY. IN ADDITION, THE EXHIBITORS, THEMSELVES, USED THE VSMF EXTENSIVELY TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON OTHER PRODUCTS OF THEIR COMPANIES AND THEIR SPECIFICATIONS. COPIES WERE MADE OF THESE SPECIFICATIONS AND GIVEN TO THE BUSINESS VISITORS.

H) THE SYSTEM IS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN PRINTED DIRECTORIES. IF THE VISITOR WANTS ONLY THE ADDRESS OF A CERTAIN MANUFACTURER, IT IS MORE CONVENIENT TO USE THE THOMAS REGISTER, U.S. INDUSTRIAL DIRECTORY OR DUN AND BRADSTREET MILLION DOLLAR/MIDDLE MARKET DIRECTORY, ETC. IF A VISITOR WANTS TO SEE A CATALOG FOR SPECIFICATIONS, OPERATIONAL DATA OR OTHER DETAILED INFORMATION ON A PRODUCT OR MANUFACTURER, THERE IS NO BETTER SOURCE THAN THE VSMF. ALTHOUGH THOMAS REGISTER AND SWEETS' INCLUDE CATALOGS, THERE ARE ONLY PARTIAL CATALOGS OF SOME COMPANIES AND SELECTED EQUIPMENT, WHILE THE VSMF INCLUDES ALMOST COMPLETE CATALOGS.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9069

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I) THE FIVE DIRECTORIES WHICH POST USES MOST EXTENSIVELY ARE AS FOLLOWS: (1) THOMAS REGISTER OF AMERICAN MANUFACTURERS - 1975 ED.; (2) AMERICAN REGISTER OF EXPORTERS & IMPORTERS - 1975 ED.; (3) DUN & BRADSTREET MILLION DOLLAR/MIDDLE MARKET DIRECTORIES - 1976 ED.; (4) MARCONI'S INTERNATIONAL REGISTER - 1976 ED.; (5) STANDARD & POOR'S REGISTER OF CORPORATIONS, DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVES -

1976 ED.

J) EXAMPLES OF U.S. EXPORTS RESULTING FROM USE OF THE VSMF ARE AS FOLLOWS: A LOCAL COMPANY, SAN LEH TRADING CO., LTD. BOUGHT A COMPLETE SET OF SLUICE GATES VALUED AT US\$24,400 PRODUCED BY RODNEY HUNG CO. FROM ITS LOCAL AGENT. THE BUYER LOCATED THE MANUFACTURER BY USING THE VSMF PLANT ENGINEERING SERVICE FILE. THE SAME BUYER ALSO LOCATED SOME U.S. MANUFACTURERS OF TRAVELING SIDEWALK FROM THE VSMF FOR THE NEW AIRPORT IN TAIWAN. THE SALE, IN THE US\$200,000 RANGE, IS NOW IN THE NEGOTIATING STAGE. ANOTHER LOCAL COMPANY, BANIN ENTERPRISE CO., LTD., LOCATED POWER SUPPLIES MANUFACTURED BY RAPID ELECTRIC INC. FROM VSMF'S DESIGN ENGINEERING SERVICE FILES. IN FEBRUARY 1976 THE LOCAL COMPANY IMPORTED THE POWER SUPPLIES WORTH US\$2,219 FROM RAPID ELECTRIC INC.

K) ABOUT 40 PERCENT OF THE USERS ARE ABLE TO LOCATE THE INFORMATION THEY ARE SEEKING AND 10 PERCENT OF THE USERS ARE SO IMPRESSED WITH THE SYSTEM THAT THEY USE THE VSMF EVERYTIME THEY COME TO THE LIBRARY INSTEAD OF THE TRADITIONAL DIRECTORIES. FROM THE COMMENT CARDS FILLED OUT BY END-USERS, UNCLASSIFIED

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12 PERCENT OF THE USERS THOUGHT THE SYSTEM WAS EXCELLENT, 14 PERCENT VERY GOOD AND 27 PERCENT GOOD. NEGATIVE COMMENTS OF THE SYSTEM CENTERED ON: (1) LACK OF SOME CARTRIDGES WHICH SHOULD BE IN OUR INSTALLATION; (2) THE 3M READER-PRINTER WAS OFTEN NOT WORKING PROPERLY; (3) THE LIFE-CYCLE OF THE PAPER USED IN THE MACHINE IS TOO SHORT, RESULTING IN THE USERS BEING UNABLE MAKE PRINTS FROM THE VSMF; AND (4) SOME PRODUCTS LISTED IN THE DESIGN ENGINEERING INDEX HAVE NO MANUFACTURER OR FEW MANUFACTURERS INCLUDED IN THE MICROFILM.

L) INFORMATION HANDLING SERVICE SENT TWO REPRESENTATIVES TO TAIPEI TO GIVE STAFF TRAINING ON HOW TO USE VSMF DURING SEPTEMBER 1974 AND FEBRUARY 1975. IHS HELD TRAINING SESSIONS TO INTRODUCE THEIR SYSTEM TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN MAY, 1975. MR. ADAMS, ONE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF IHS COMES TO TAIPEI ABOUT EVERY THREE MONTHS. FROM TIME TO TIME WE DISCOVERED THAT WE ARE SHORT OF SOME CARTRIDGES WE SHOULD HAVE AND WE HAVE INFORMED THE CARTRIDGE CONTROL DEPARTMENT OF IHS SEVERAL TIMES, BUT THEY NEVER RESPONDED. ON FEBRUARY 18, 1976 MR. ADAMS CAME TO TAIPEI AND SENT A TELEX TO IHS ABOUT THIS MATTER AND, AS A RESULT, WE RECEIVED PART OF THE CARTRIDGES WE NEEDED AT THE END OF FEBRUARY.

IHS ALSO GAVE POST SOME ACTION REQUEST FORMS FOR FOLLOW-UP ON PRODUCTS THAT WE WERE UNABLE TO LOCATE. WE HAVE SENT 15 ACTION REQUEST FORMS SINCE JANUARY 1975 AND HAVE RECEIVED ONLY ONE RESPONSE. ACCORDING TO THE INSTRUCTION, THE CATALOG WE NEED WAS INCLUDED IN PLANT ENGINEERING SERVICE CARTRIDGE 1498, BUT WE DID NOT HAVE THAT CARTRIDGE IN OUR INSTALLATION.

M) THE POST RECOMMENDS THE VSMF SYSTEM FOR USE IN OTHER TRADE CENTERS AND FOREIGN SERVICE POSTS FOR THE REASONS MENTIONED ABOVE AND BELIEVES THIS SYSTEM, IF APPLIED PROPERLY, CAN INCREASE THE EXPORT SALES OF AMERICAN PRODUCTS.

N) THE VSMF SYSTEM HAS BEEN A GREAT ASSET TO BOTH THE COMMERCIAL SECTION AND THE TRADE CENTER IN PROMOTING UNCLASSIFIED

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SALES OF U.S. PRODUCTS. WE BELIEVE THAT AS MORE AND MORE LOCAL BUSINESSMEN AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THE SYSTEM, SALES DIRECTLY RESULTING FROM THE SYSTEM'S USE SHOULD MORE THAN ADEQUATELY JUSTIFY THE COST. THE SEVENTEEN MONTHS OF OPERATION (FROM NOVEMBER 1975 THROUGH MARCH 1976) HAS GIVEN US A POSITIVE INDICATION OF ITS VALUE AND IT IS THE CONSENSUS OF BOTH THE COMMERCIAL SECTION AND TRADE CENTER THAT THE VSMF SYSTEM SHOULD BE RETAINED.

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